



News Release

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State awards region \$657,500 to boost manufacturing training capacity

25% hike in training capacity projected; 150 workers to receive career advancement accounts

INDIANAPOLIS (August 2, 2007) -- The Indiana Department of Workforce Development has awarded the Region 9 Workforce Board a \$657,500 grant to expand the region's manufacturing workforce and increase the flow of high school and college graduates into manufacturing careers.

The "Tomorrow's Manufacturing Workforce" grant will be used primarily to boost the training capacity in the region for manufacturing jobs by about twenty-five percent. Additionally, funds will be used to launch a career advancement account program for 100 dislocated workers, who will each receive \$1500 for educational and training expenses.

"As Southeast Indiana continues its economic hot streak, we want to make sure that the region has the skilled workforce to fill the thousands of jobs coming online in the months ahead," said Governor Mitch Daniels.

The grant will fund expansion of manufacturing programs in both secondary and post-secondary levels at the Columbus Area Career Connection, Southeast Career Center, Ivy Tech campuses in Columbus, Lawrenceburg, Batesville and Madison, and the Purdue College of Technology. Enrollment in these programs in March 2007 was approximately 1400, which officials hope to increase to more than 1750 by the 2009-2010 school year.

"The collaboration and partnership among the communities and organizations within the ten counties that comprise the region has just been fantastic," said Andrew Penca, Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. "Everyone has come together and is aggressively addressing the great challenge to meet the growth in the workforce we are projecting."

Penca noted the region faces a "perfect storm" in the manufacturing sector: several thousand new positions coming online, which will cause many incumbent workers to switch jobs creating openings at existing facilities, and during a period when increasing numbers of baby boomers face retirement. "Needless to say, we will need an

extraordinary well-coordinated effort from the employers and educational community to fill the openings that will occur throughout the region in the next few years,” he said.

Earlier this year, the region launched an aggressive campaign to boost both the number of trained manufacturing workers and the image of the manufacturing field in anticipation of the new jobs coming on line in the next several years as a result of announcements by Honda, Cummins and other suppliers. Projections indicate the potential for 2,500 to 4,000 new jobs in the region.

Manufacturing accounts for 28 percent of the jobs in the region, distributed at approximately 550 manufacturing companies within the ten-county region. Officials report a need for additional engineers, technicians, machinists and general production workers.

In addition to an expansion of enrollments and course offerings, the region is also seeking to increase the number of workers attaining the Manufacturing Skills Standard Council (MSSC) certification each year. The MSSC is a national organization that focuses on the core knowledge and skills needed by production workers in the nation's advanced manufacturing sector, and attainment of the industry credential demonstrates that workers have mastered the skills needed in the high-growth, technical jobs of the 21st century.

The grant will also fund career advancement accounts for 100 low- to mid-wage incumbent and dislocated workers, who will receive \$1500 for tuition, books and fees. Under this program, all training must result in a portable, industry-recognized credential such as a degree, professional certification or license. The credential should transfer across an industry regardless of specific employer. Participants must have a high school diploma or GED and be job ready in order to qualify.

The region includes the counties of Bartholomew, Dearborn, Decatur, Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Ohio, Ripley and Switzerland..

The grant announced today from the state builds on another regional effort that began earlier this year to build awareness of advanced manufacturing as a high-growth, high-wage occupation. Under the *Dream It. Do It.* campaign, the region is mounting an aggressive awareness campaign aimed at attracting young adults into manufacturing careers. The state also recently awarded the regional workforce board a grant of \$1.5 million to increase training for 500 individuals in advanced manufacturing.

To leverage resources and achieve economies of scale in marketing and awareness efforts, Conexus Indiana will partner with the state and region in managing the *Dream It. Do It.* campaign. Conexus Indiana is a new initiative designed to capitalize on and promote emerging opportunities in advanced manufacturing and logistics.